

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are currently pending.

Claim 7 has been amended.

All claims have been rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Acres (5,655,961) owned in common with the present application. In making the rejection the Examiner has essentially repeated the claim elements of independent claim 1 with the exception that the "bonus token signal" in claim 1 has instead been referred to as the "bonus signal." Although a §102(b) rejection was made, there was no mention as to where in the Acres reference the claimed elements for the dependent claims are disclosed.

Applicants traverse this rejection.

The Examiner has ignored a critical aspect of the invention and one that clearly distinguishes it over co-owned patent Acres '961. The present invention claims the use of a bonus TOKEN signal, in which electronic tokens reside in certain machines to allow bonusing. (e.g. CLAIM 1 – "sending a bonus token signal to at least one of the" gaming machines; CLAIMS 3 & 7 – "removing the bonus token signal from the" gaming machines; CLAIM 8 – "reserving the bonus token at a bonus server"; CLAIM 9 – "gaming machines switches from the normal operation mode to the bonus operation mode responsive to the bonus token signal". In practice, and as described within the specification of the present application, the token is passed to multiple machines, between gaming machines, and from the gaming machine back to the bonus server from which it originated.

The implementation of bonuses in gaming machines by passing tokens through a network is revolutionary over the industry's previous method of using bonus trigger signals. As an example of how a bonus token signal is unlike normal trigger signals that instruct a gaming machine to turn bonusing 'on' and another to turn it 'off', claims 3 and 7 of the present application call for the bonus token signal to be "removed" from the gaming machine. This would be impossible with a normal trigger signal as there is nothing to return and, once the bonusing is turned off, no reason to return the signal. Tokens, in particular embodiments of the invention, are intended to reside in locations where bonuses are active or, if no bonus is active, in the bonus server for later distribution.

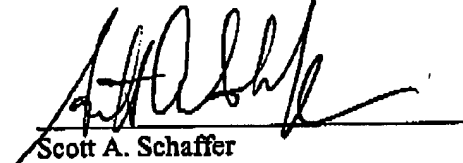
The present invention claiming of bonus tokens to initiate bonuses is different from that taught in Acres '961, where a signal is routed to particular control circuits of gaming machines with an activation signal to turn on a bonus flag, or a deactivation signal to turn the bonus flag off. No use of tokens to enact bonusing identification is disclosed. And though the Examiner did not address the issue, Acres '961 does not teach the concept of a temporary

bonus pool (claim 4), nor specify the games responsible for funding the temporary bonus pool (claim 5). Thus, anticipation rejections in view of the art of record would be clearly erroneous.

Because of the clear differences between the cited art and the claimed invention, no amendments to the claims are deemed necessary to overcome the art. For the foregoing reasons, and particularly in consideration of the difference between tokens and trigger signals, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-10 of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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